Child Count, Placement and Census of Students with Disabilities

August, 2002

Core Data Screen 11

DATA NOTES

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION – DATA COORDINATION

WHAT IS IT?

❖ Screen 11 of Core Data is a web based data collection that is due December 15th of this year.

❖ Screen 11 is an annual report required of each state by Office of Special Education Programs. The report must include the following information:

▪ Number of students with Individualized Education Programs, as of December 1 by age, primary disability, and race/ethnicity (**Child Count**). This is an unduplicated count; each child with a disability is counted only once. The primary disability categories are defined in Missouri's *State Plan for Implementation of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

▪ Type of educational setting in which each of these students receives his/her special education services (**Placement**). The placement categories are defined in *Core Data Collection System Manual*. The placement category is determined by the amount of time the student is <u>removed</u> from the general education setting.

▪ **Census** is an annual report required by Missouri State law 162.695. The census report to the state does not include all the information the law requires school districts to collect. In addition to all the children included in the districts child count the following information is reported on Screen 11:

➢ Children 0-35 months in Part C programs

➢ All children with disabilities ages 0-6 years with unknown services

➢ Children ages 5-22 years for whom no services are required

➢ All students in the State Operated Programs (MO School for the Blind; MO School for the Deaf; State Schools for Severely Handicapped)

➢ All students with disabilities in private/ parochial schools receiving no special education services

➢ All students reported in public residential facilities

Screen 11 requires total numbers of students by age, disability and placement. No individual students are identified in any of these annual reports.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of all DESE data collection activities is to **improve outcomes for students**. When all school district personnel understand the purpose and uses of data, collecting and reporting accurate data become more immediately relevant. Improved outcomes for students translate as **successful teachers and programs**.

LOCAL LEVEL:

❖ This information is essential **to plan** for faculty, facilities, instructional materials and time.

❖ Information about children with disabilities is essential to **effective curriculum planning**.

❖ This information is helpful in deciding when, where, and what **types of technology** are appropriate, including assistive technology.

❖ The demographic information is necessary for **student performance reports**.

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❖ Students with disabilities are included in all data collection activities and all district and statewide performance reports, and therefore, in all **reports to local Boards of Education**.

❖ Information about children with disabilities is reviewed and analyzed during the Missouri School Improvement Program team visit; it is essential for the **Special Education Monitoring Report**.

❖ The quality of the district's programs and **how well the district responds to the needs of children** with disabilities are critical issues for the school district and community. These reports provide necessary input in making those determinations.

❖ This information is useful to the community in assessing and responding to community needs, and **long range community planning.**

STATE LEVEL:

❖ This information assists Division of Special Education in determining topics that need to be addressed with **technical assistance**, how effective technical assistance has been, regional areas where further assistance is needed, and how to effectively deliver that assistance.

❖ The Division conducts **self-assessment** activities and submits a state level performance report to Office of Special Education Programs. Demographic and student performance information are critical to that assessment process.

❖ Child Count and Census help DESE **identify resources needed** in the future, and where those resources will be needed.

❖ State legislators use this information to **determine education appropriations**.

NATIONAL LEVEL:

❖ This information is necessary to determine the **national incidence rate**. A number of government agencies use this demographic data to determine allocation of resources, policy development and research studies.

❖ The Annual Report to Congress requires this information from individual states. This report is critical in seeking **reauthorization of IDEA, and appropriations for those programs**.

REPORTING GUIDELINES:

❖ Child Count, Placement, and Census are collected on one screen in Core Data: **Screen 11.**

❖ Detailed instructions for Screen 11 are included in the *Core Data Collection System Manual*, **Exhibits 18 through 21**.

❖ Disability categories and placements can vary with age. **Give special attention to placement categories, age groups and disability categories**.

❖ **Definitions of disabilities** included in *Missouri State Plan for Implementation of IDEA* are critical to this report. Be sure the school district definitions are consistent with those in Missouri's State Plan.

❖ **Note the differences** in Child Count and Census. **Child Count** is a count of only those students with an Individualized Education Program who are receiving services as of December 1. **Census** includes all children with disabilities who reside in the district whether or not they have an IEP and are receiving services.

❖ Section 162.695 RSMo and the *Missouri State Plan for Implementation of Part B* require districts to collect the following information about students who are reported on the census:

   ▪ Name of the student
   ▪ Parent or guardian's name and address
   ▪ Birth date
   ▪ Age of the child
   ▪ Disabling condition or conditions
   ▪ Services provided

If a district suspects the child has a disability, the district is required by IDEA to conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not the child has a disability and is in need of special education services. The evaluation requirements must be consistent with the requirements for Part C or Part B, depending on the age of the child.

If the disability is not confirmed, the child should be removed from the district census.

❖ Placement categories need to be clearly defined for all staff reporting. Remember that placement categories are **determined by the amount of time a special education student is removed from the general education setting.** Any unique placements within the district need to be clarified and identified within the categories available in *Core Data Collection System Manual.*

COLLECTING ACCURATE DATA:

So many important decisions depend on data; the need for accurate data is obvious. The following are intended as **helpful tips** toward collecting accurate data:

❖ **Review directions** in *Core Data Collection System Manual.* There can be minor changes in directions from one year to the next that may impact the data.

❖ **Identify all sources of information/data**: including alternative schools; contracts with other districts and/or private agencies; preschools; homebound students; private/ parochial and home school students. Report all the students for whom your district is responsible, including students who live in your community but attend other schools.

❖ **Establish district policies and procedures** to ensure that information is collected from all appropriate sources, with sufficient time to collect all data, and to compile and proofread reports before submitting them.

❖ **Give employees ample notice** about information that will be needed. Knowing early what data will be needed, how data need to be collected and stored can make it much easier to retrieve when needed.

❖ Accurate definitions are essential to collecting accurate data; be clear about who and what is being counted. Be sure definitions used in the school district are **consistent with definitions at the state level**.

❖ If the district uses a database to facilitate reporting, it is helpful to store that information in a manner consistent with the report format. **Select a database that is flexible and sensitive to changes** in data collection requirements.

VERIFYING THE ACCURACY OF THE DATA:

✓ **Proofread**. Print a copy of the screen or report prior to submitting it. Run the Edit Summary Report and correct any errors. Be sure information is reported in the correct line/column.

✓ Review accuracy of calculations. **Compare totals** that should be of equal value to assure that they are. Errors in calculation usually require a review of each column, number, and cell.

✓ Review columns, numbers and cells for **"reasonable" numbers**. "Reasonable" will vary with each school district. School district personnel are likely to know how many students with low incidence disabilities are in the district. If it is a small district, the age of the students might also be known, and simple proofreading could identify such errors.

✓ If the data appear to be unusual, based on your knowledge of the school district, review **factors that could impact the data**, such as:

- An increase or decrease in **total student enrollment**. Compare the percentage of students with disabilities with the total school enrollment; consider the reasonableness of that figure. Increases or decreases may occur; the validity of such occurrences needs to be evaluated within the context of the unique features of your community.

- Consider any **changes in staffing** that may have impacted the data.

- **Lack of understanding** from people reporting: Were instructions clear? Does new staff understand all the possible data sources, definitions and categories?

- Confusion about which students are being counted or who is doing the counting; keep in mind that Screen 11 requires **unduplicated counts** of students.

✓ Review Child Count **Verification Procedures** and **Count of Students with Disabilities Verification Sheet** from previous years to help identify factors that may impact the data.

✓ Compare data. Compare **numbers** and incidence rates from one year to another. Be sure that any changes are consistent with changes in student enrollment.

✓ Further comparisons can be made with other **state and national data**. See Resources below for more aids.

✓ Consider **changes in the community** that may impact the data.

- A **new business** in the area might increase population, increase total school enrollment, and likely increase Child Count and Census.

- A **medical facility** specializing in treatment of a particular disability might create an increase in child count and/or census.

- Any child or youth **facilities** that moved into or away from the community would likely impact the district's Child Count and Census.

- A **private or parochial school** in the community would likely impact Child Count and Census.

RESOURCES:

The following **RESOURCES** are available at http://www.dese.state.mo.us :

Core Data Collection System Manual http://www.dese.state.mo.us./divimprove/coredata
Questions and Answers, Screen 11 http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divspeced/DataCoord/Q&ASreen11.html

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